

THE
CONDUCT
OF
ADMIRAL KNOWLES
ON
THE LATE EXPEDITION
Set in a True LIGHT.

BEING

An Answer to the Accusations contained in two Pieces,
entituled, "The Expedition against Rochefort
"fully stated, by a Country Gentleman;" and
"The Reply of the Country Gentleman to the
"Answer of his Military Arguments."

BY
CHARLES KNOWLES, Esq;
Vice Admiral of the Red.

Magna est Veritas, et prevalebit.

D U B L I N:

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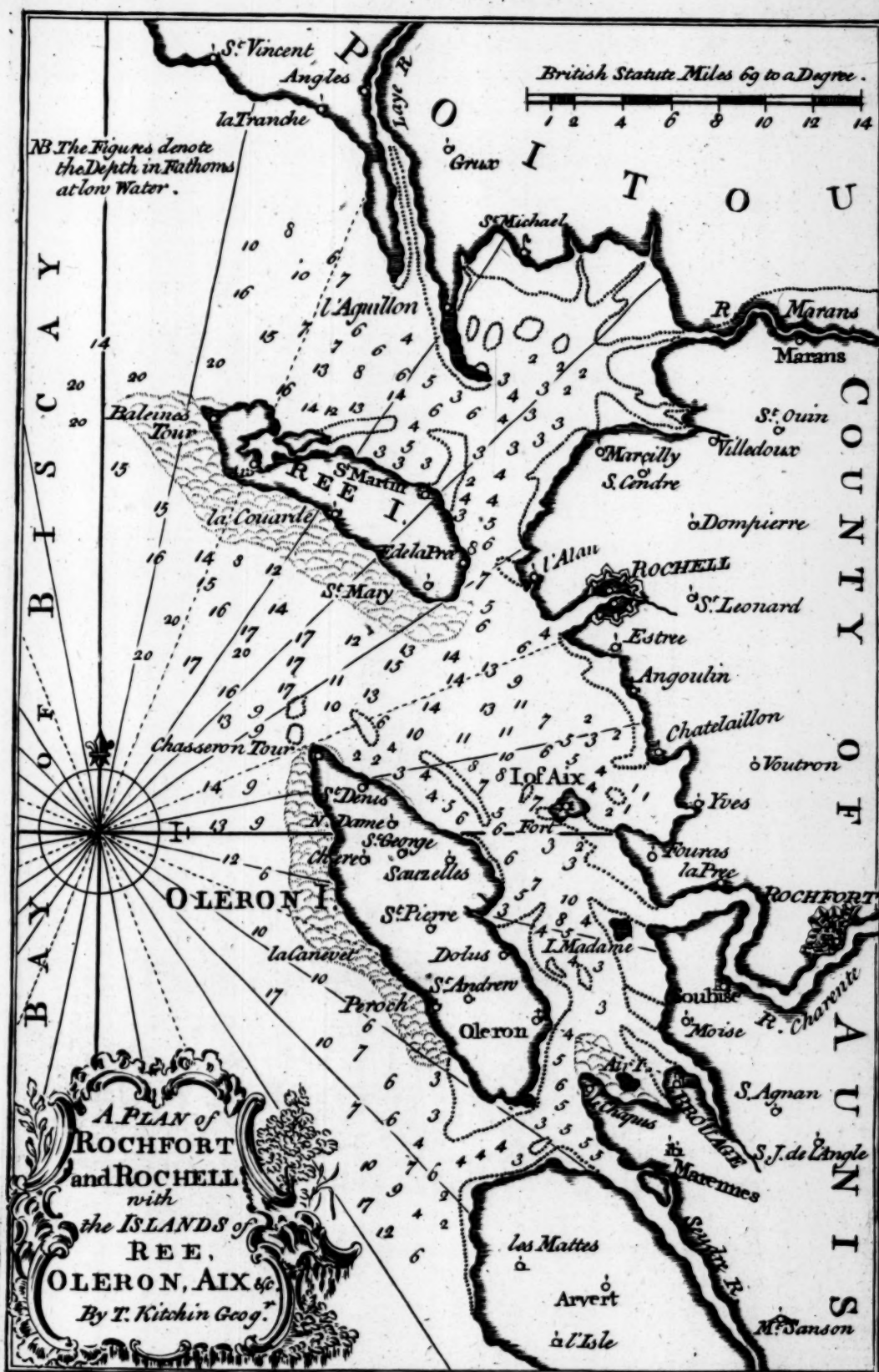
"Author of his literary arguments,"
"The body of the County Gentleman," and
"fully backed by a County Gentleman,"
enabled "the expedition against Wolfe to
be directed to the Accommodation of the
County."

CHARTERED BOWLING

Argon de V. H. 1890

DEBUT

[illegible]





THE CONDUCT, &c.

CONSIDERING the subordinate Station in which I served, on the late Expedition to the Coast of *France*, I little thought it would be in the Power of the most inveterate Malice to lay any Part of its Failure upon me. But I have found myself deceived. To take Notice of all the anonymous Pamphlets published on this Occasion, would be endless; and almost all agree in the same false Accusation. But there are two Pieces which seem to be principally regarded by the Public; and to these, as far as they have made me a Party, I will give an Answer. For I must own I am not so insensible to honest Fame, as to be proof against the venom of a malignant heart; and if I vindicate my conduct, by a deduction of facts which are undeniable, without calling in question the Conduct of Other People, it can give no Offence.

In the first of these Libels, intituled,
 “ The Expedition against *Rochefort* fully
 “ stated, &c. by a Country Gentleman,”
 the writer introduces his accusation against
 Me, by quoting at length the first article
 of the Report of the Board of Enquiry.
 When this is recited, I shall first give his
 own reasoning and objections, and then
 my answer to them.

I.

“ It appears, that one cause of the
 “ Expedition having failed, is the not at-
 “ tacking Fort Fouras by Sea; at the same
 “ time it would have been attacked by Land,
 “ agreeable to the first design; which cer-
 “ tainly must have been of the greatest u-
 “ tility towards carrying your Majesty’s
 “ Instructions into execution. It was at
 “ first resolved by Sir Edward Hawke,
 “ (Thierry, the pilot of the *Magnanime*,
 “ having undertaken the safe conduct of a
 “ ship to Fort Fouras for that purpose) but
 “ afterwards laid aside, upon the repre-
 “ sentation of Vice-admiral Knowles, that
 “ the *Barfleur*, the ship designed for that
 “ service, was on ground, at the distance
 “ of 4 or 5 miles from the Shore. But as
 “ neither

“neither Sir Edward Hawke nor the Pilot could attend to give any information upon that head, we cannot presume to offer a certain opinion thereupon.

This is the first article of the Report.
 —I am ready to allow, that, as far as this Article goes, the Commanders of the Land Forces are acquitted; but if you will argue farther, that All the Commanders who were to conduct the Expedition were in no fault, especially if you insist as you do, that it appears plain, that Fouras was inaccessible by Sea, notwithstanding the Pilot Thierry's promise, which it should seem he could not make good, I totally deny your conclusion. A child in argument must see the fallacy of it. If the Fact was clear, that Fouras was inaccessible to shipping, how comes it to pass, that the not attacking it by Sea, is given as a cause of the Failure of the Expedition? No positive opinion, you say, was given upon it. Why was it not, and where was the necessity of leaving this point open for farther inquiry, after the return of Sir Edward Hawke and the Pilot, if it already appeared a measure impracticable? But impracticable is the word, and every thing from beginning to end is to be pronounced Impracticable. I say, that it

A 3

appears

appears to be far from certain, that Fort Fouras was inaccessible to shipping, and yet the Board of Officers did right to give no opinion, because Sir Edward Hawke and Thierry, Parties principally concerned, had not been heard. I will enter farther into the consideration of this matter, for some conclusion may be drawn from it.

I shall not enter into the reasoning of the General Officers who composed the Board of Enquiry, for giving or not giving the Opinion that they did, as I think that opinion, had it been determinate, was neither binding upon the Public, or me; it being more than probable, if three other Generals had sat on the Enquiry, they might have given a different opinion; nay, that those very generals who did compose that Board, would have given a different opinion themselves from what they did, had the whole Proceedings of the expedition been opened to them, or even the facts which appeared at the Court-martial afterwards.

II.

“ It appears from the evidence of Vice
 “ Admiral Knowles, that the whole affair
 “ of this attack upon Fouras was delega-
 “ ted by Sir Edward Hawke to his Inspec-
 “ tion, and that Sir Edward had proceed-
 “ ed so far in the execution of the plan,
 “ as to direct his secretary to begin an order
 “ to lighten the Barfleur for that purpose.
 “ But this was laid aside upon the remon-
 “ strances of Captain Graves, and Vice
 “ Admiral Knowles, that the Barfleur was
 “ aground, at between four and five miles
 “ from the shore; that then Sir Edward
 “ ordered him to try to carry the Bomb-
 “ ketches in, which he did; and run them
 “ aground at more than two miles and $\frac{2}{3}$
 “ from Fort Fouras, where they were like-
 “ ly to have been taken by row-boats: that
 “ then he run the Coventry Frigate aground,
 “ five times within the hour, at a greater
 “ distance from the shore than the Bomb-
 “ ketch. That then (and it seems not till
 “ then) he sent his Master to sound, and
 “ found that at two miles distance from
 “ the fort, there was but six feet water at
 A 4 “ high

“ high water *. All these notable exploits
 “ were performed by Vice Admiral
 “ Knowles, the same who it is said ad-
 “ vised Sir Edward Hawke not even to en-
 “ ter the road of Basque, lest he should be
 “ bombarded; the same one has formerly
 “ heard and read of in Courts Martial;
 “ the same who on a late Parliamentary en-
 “ quiry had the happiness to boast such pe-
 “ culiar protection and countenance from you,
 “ Sir, the same who, as I have heard, de-
 “ tained the Squadron two days in sight of
 “ the French coast, because he had sent
 “ away the pilot destined to conduct it upon
 “ a chace after a French ship. But I will
 “ not recapitulate his virtues or his merit.
 “ It was upon the remonstrance of this
 “ Vice Admiral, whose station in command
 “ entitled him to at least so much confidence
 “ from his superior Officer, that the resolu-

* Query How high do the tides rise in the Bay of
 Biscay when the water at the mouth of the river
 Charent is but six feet at high water?

No one acquainted with navigation would ask
 this question: because below *Bristol* the tide rises
 near forty feet, and yet above *Bristol* in many places
 there may be not above six feet water, and so at
Yarmouth without and within the sands; and in ma-
 ny other places there is great difference in the rise of
 the tides.

“ tion

“ tion to attack *Fouras* by sea was laid a-
 “ side. Now then let me relate to you
 “ the reasons which induce me to believe,
 “ that notwithstanding this report of Vice
 “ Admiral Knowles, Fort *Fouras* was
 “ accessible by sea, though the Vice Admi-
 “ ral had not the good fortune to find out
 “ the Channel.

“ The first part of the charge against
 “ me is, That the whole affair of attack-
 “ ing *Fouras* was delegated by Sir *E.*
 “ *Hawke* to my inspection. Let us now
 “ see Sir *E. Hawke*’s manner of relating
 “ that Story upon oath before the Court
 “ Martial, (p. 82, 3.) Being ask’d whe-
 “ ther at any and at what time a proposal
 “ was made to him to lay a Ship to batter
 “ *Fouras*? he answered in the affirmative,
 “ and said on the 24th of *September*, that
 “ he approved of the proposal, and the
 “ pilot of the *Magnanime* was examined
 “ as to the strength of the place and the
 “ depth of water near it: Elated with
 “ the success of the 23d, and fond of the
 “ *Magnamine*, he said at first before Cap-
 “ tain *Mordaunt* he would carry her in
 “ and destroy the Fort. The deponent
 “ had attentively considered the shore,
 “ and was sensible the *Magnanime*, which
 “ drew

“ drew more water than some of our
 “ three-deck’d Ships, could not be brought
 “ near enough to batter the Fort, he gave
 “ the Pilot’s Gasconade time to subside,
 “ and then asked him if he could carry a
 “ sixty gun Ship in against it? He answer-
 “ ed, her metal was not weighty enough,
 “ as there were 24 pounders in the Fort.
 “ He then proposed to him to lighten the
 “ *Barfleur* two feet (this second conversa-
 “ tion was upon the quarter deck, by the
 “ intervention of a man well versed in
 “ such *French* as those sort of people
 “ speak.) The Pilot seemed something sa-
 “ tisfied with this, and in consequence
 “ the deponent prepared an order to *Vice*
 “ *Admiral Knowles* to lighten the *Bar-*
 “ *fleur*, and in the mean time gave him a
 “ verbal order, who immediately went
 “ away to give the necessary directions,
 “ and to enquire into the practicability of
 “ the attempt. The pilot now recollected
 “ himself, and declared that even thus
 “ lighten’d the *Barfleur* could not be car-
 “ ried near enough; that when she could
 “ come nearest at the top of high water,
 “ on the Ebb she must sink at least six feet
 “ in the mud, if not more, from which
 “ he could not answer whether she would
 “ rise. Upon trial afterwards the pilot
 “ could

“ could not carry a Bomb-ketch within
 “ random shot of the *Fort*, as Mr. *Knowles*
 “ informed him, in whom, as being the
 “ second Sea Officer in command, he
 “ apprehends he might confide for that
 “ information.

“ I shall now have recourse to the tes-
 “ timony I gave both at the Enquiry and
 “ the Court Martial. First at the Enqui-
 “ ry, (p. 41, 2.) *Vice Admiral Knowles*
 “ being asked by the board, whether he
 “ knew of any proposal being made for
 “ attacking *Fort Fouras* by Sea at any
 “ council of war or meeting? answered,
 “ he could not particularly charge his me-
 “ mory, but knows very well *Sir Edward*
 “ *Hawke* asked his opinion about it, and
 “ said that the pilot had told him that a
 “ ship could go within a small distance to
 “ batter it; and *Sir Edward* directed his
 “ secretary to begin an order for the *Bar-*
 “ *fleur*'s being lightened for that service,
 “ the *Barfleur* drawing near two feet less
 “ water than the *Magnanime*. When he
 “ returned on board his own ship, he sent
 “ for *Captain Graves*, who commanded
 “ the *Barfleur*, to acquaint him with the
 “ orders *Sir Edward Hawke* had given
 “ him; *Captain Graves* answered that
 “ the

“ the ship was aground where she lay,
 “ and he might look at her, for the water
 “ had ebb’d away a foot from her, and
 “ she then lay between four and five
 “ miles from the shore (*meaning the shore*
 “ *of Fort Fouras.*) He acquainted Sir
 “ *Edward Hawke* with this, who sup-
 “ pressed the order.”

Let us now see my deposition concern-
 ing this matter given at the Court Martial,
 where I was going to refer to the minutes
 I had in my pocket, of the Testimony I
 before had given the board of Enquiry,
 but was desired to relate it without (p.
 75. Court martial.)

“ Some of the Witnesses having men-
 “ tioned *Vice Admiral Knowles* as being
 “ present when a discourse was had by
 “ *Sir Edward Hawke*, touching an at-
 “ tack intended to be made on *Fouras* by
 “ sea, he was desired to inform the Court
 “ what he knew concerning that intenti-
 “ on, or the practicability of such an
 “ attack, the *Vice Admiral* then deposed
 “ in answer to the question; that after the
 “ surrender of the *Isle of Aix*, *Sir Ed-*
 “ *ward Hawke* told him the pilot of the
 “ *Magnanime* had offered to carry her in to
 “ batter

“ batter *Fort Fouras*, he does not recol-
 “ lect at what distance; the deponent ob-
 “ jected to the *Magnanime*, as she drew
 “ at least a foot more water than the *Bar-*
 “ *fleur*, and proposed that ship instead of
 “ her, as being of greater force as well
 “ as an old ship, and her loss therefore
 “ immaterial. *Sir Edward Hawke* di-
 “ rected the deponent to have the *Barfleur*
 “ lightened immediately for that purpose.
 “ When he returned on board his own
 “ ship; he sent for *Captain Graves*, and
 “ told him *Sir Edward's* intention; the
 “ captain replied, his ship was aground
 “ where she then lay, being, to the best
 “ of his judgment, more than five miles
 “ distant from the *Fort*. He has since
 “ heard that *Colonel Brudenell* was aboard
 “ her at that time. Upon this several
 “ masters, together with pilots, were di-
 “ rected to go sounding, particularly the
 “ master of the *Barfleur*, and of his own
 “ ship the *Neptune*. On his acquainting
 “ *Sir Edward Hawke* with the impracti-
 “ cability of getting the *Barfleur* in, and
 “ the masters having made their reports
 “ of the soundings, that intention was
 “ laid aside as impossible. Some days af-
 “ ter, he cannot be positive, but believes
 “ for the first council of war, *Sir Ed-*
 “ ward

“ *ward Hawke* directed the deponent to
 “ carry in the two Bomb-ketches to try to
 “ bombard the *Fort*, the deponent im-
 “ mediately gave their captains orders to do
 “ it, and directed the pilot of the *Mag-*
 “ *nanime* to conduct the *Infernal Bomb* in,
 “ and the other to follow. In attempting
 “ to get in, the pilot ran the *Infernal* a-
 “ ground, where she lay some considera-
 “ ble time; two row galleys seeing her
 “ alone (for she had out sail’d the other
 “ Bomb, and was at least two miles from
 “ her) made to attack the *Infernal*; which
 “ the deponent perceiving, hastened on
 “ board, and made a signal for all boats
 “ manned and armed to go to her assistance,
 “ and went himself in the *Coventry Fri-*
 “ *gate*; on which the galleys retired, af-
 “ ter having fired a great many shot at
 “ the Bomb-ketches.

“ When the Bomb was aground, she was
 “ a long way without the reach of her
 “ shells with the greatest requisite of pow-
 “ der, (which he knows will fly two miles
 “ and two thirds) having thrown several
 “ which fell short. The *Coventry*, in
 “ attempting to get to the Bomb, ran a-
 “ shore five several times. After the tide
 “ had flowed, and the Bomb floated, she
 “ got

“ got under sail again, and worked nearer
 “ to *Fouras*, as near as her draught of
 “ water would let her, and then threw se-
 “ veral shells more, none of which did
 “ reach, &c.

The reader will please to compare my Evidence with *Sir Edward Hawke's*, with whom I had no Communication, he being at sea, and he'll find them agree in every circumstance.

I shall now proceed to facts of a stronger nature, to prove the impracticability and impossibility of carrying any ship of force to batter *Fort Fouras*, viz. such as the soundings taken by *Mr. Poulglass* master of the *Barfleur*, now master of the *Magnanime*, on the 26th of September 1757. off of the entrance of *Rechefort* river.

Fort Fouras S. E. about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and the *Isle of Enett* E. three fathoms muddy ground.

Fort Fouras S. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. and *Enett* East $\frac{1}{2}$ N. a foot less, 3 hard ground.

Fort

Fort Fouras S. E. 6 S. about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile
and *Enett* E. by N. $\frac{1}{4}$ less, 3 fathoms.

Fort Fouras E. S. E. and the north end
of *Enett* on a church on a high point of
land to the eastward on the main, 3 fa-
thoms.

The *Fort* E. S. E. and the old house on
Enett in one with the church on the main
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms, hard ground.

The *Fort* E. S. E. $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile, and *Enett*
N. E. by E. 2 fathoms, rocky ground.

The south end of *Enett* and the church
on the main in one, 2 fathoms rocky.

Fort Fouras E. S. E. and *Enett* N. E.
 $\frac{1}{2}$ N. $\frac{1}{4}$ less, 2 D°. ground.

The *Fort* E. by S. about 1 mile, and
the north end of *Enett* near in one with the
S. E. and of the *Isle D'Aix*, 9 fathoms.

The *Fort* E. one mile, and *Enett* N.
N. E. 7 fathoms.

And in standing from 3 foot off each
shore,

shore, across the river, or entrance of *Rochefort*, at $\frac{1}{4}$ or a mile from the *Fort*, had but 5, 6, and 7 feet water, the ground in the middle sandy.

I do declare the above to be a true account to the best of my judgment.

PHIL. POULGLASS.

Sworn before me }
17th March 1758, } Commissioner of *Plymouth*.
Fred. Rogers,

The soundings were taken at the same time by *Mr. Morant* pilot of the *Barfleur* by order of *Captain Graves*, on the ship's grounding in 18 feet water between the *Isle of Aix* and *Fort Fouras*, and at other times also by the lieutenants of the *Royal William*, and other officers, which entirely agree with each other. To these soundings may be added the proof of ocular demonstration, the shoal being seen dry every low water for more than a mile distance from *Fouras* by at least half the people of the Fleet and Army; insomuch, that had there been a channel but the breadth of a boat we must have seen it: I had like to have forgot one circumstance more, which

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though

though only a presumptive proof, is corroborated by the others. These were the daily transactions of the *Row boats*, which came out of the river *Charante* every tide at half flood, and kept sailing or rowing under the protection of the *Fort*, and returned again always about half ebb. Had there been even this narrow Channel which has been affirmed, where was the necessity of the *Row-boats* retreating up the river again? If these proofs which were known to the Commander in chief, had not been convincing, doubtless he would have satisfied himself by such other means as were in his power.

I now come to that part of the charge against me, which says, that Sir *Edward Hawke* having ordered me to carry the Bomb-ketches in, that I did, and run them aground. The following certificate is an unanswerable contradiction to this particular.

THESE are to certify, that when his Majesty's Bomb-ketch *Infernal*, under my command, was ordered in to batter *Fort Fouras*, Vice Admiral *Knowles* was not on board; nor do I know that ever he was; and that *Thierry*, the pilot of the *Magnanime*,

Magnanime, had the sole conducting and navigating of her, and ran her ashore at a greater distance than *Flight of Shell* from the said Fort, and never could get her near enough for the Shells to reach with the greatest quantity of powder. Given under my hand, on board his Majesty's Sloop *Infernal*, the 5th Day of *February* 1758.

JAMES MACKENZIE.

As the circumstance of carrying in the *Barfleur*, and carrying in the Bomb-ketches, are confounded together, it is proper to let the reader know, the first happened on the 25th, and the last on the 29th of *September*, and that in neither had Vice-Admiral *Knowles* more to do, or farther concern, than to deliver Sir *Edward Hawke's* orders to those captains who were to execute them, and report their answers and transactions, which I did; the rest lay with the Commander in Chief.

Were farther Testimony wanting to prove that I was not on board the Bomb-ketch, Captain *Keppel* can attest that I was on shore with him in the *Island of Aix*, reconnoitring with our Glasses the bay of *Chatelaillon*, when the galleys went to at-

tack the bomb ; and that upon hearing their guns, I ran immediately to my boat, and went on board, and made the signal for all boats manned and armed, and sent them to the bomb-ketch's assistance.

“ *All these notable exploits were performed by Vice-admiral Knowles, the same who it is said advised Sir Edward Hawke not even to enter into the road of Basque, lest he should be bombarded.*” Neither Sir *Edward Hawke* nor myself were acquainted with the road of *Basque* ; but we both well knew the extent and distance necessary to anchor so large a Fleet in, and that it was also proper, when that Fleet was anchored, that it should not be in the enemy's power to annoy or destroy the ships ; and therefore I wrote a Letter to Sir *Edward Hawke*, and received from him the following Answer.

S I R,

“ I am entirely of your opinion, that
 “ it will be proper to send a couple of Cut-
 “ ters a-head of you going in, and for
 “ one of them to run near about gun-shot
 “ of the *Isle of Aix*, and if the Fort
 “ should fire at her, you will be enabled
 “ to judge better where to anchor. I
 “ think

“ think you cannot send a better man on
 “ this service than *Jasper*, who, I dare
 “ say, will acquit himself in it extremely
 “ well. It is certainly very material, that
 “ the Fleet should be safe where they
 “ come to an anchor, that they can’t be
 “ hit by any of the shot from the enemy’s
 “ Forts. I must therefore desire you will
 “ come to, the instant you shall be in a
 “ proper birth, for the rest of the Fleet
 “ to anchor by you.

I am, &c.

ED. HAWKE.

This piece of necessary caution, which
 it is plain Sir *Edward Hawke* approved,
 has been candidly construed into fear of
 being bombarded. But I would ask any
 one acquainted with military operations,
 whether they ever heard of a General’s
 encamping his army under the command of
 the enemy’s cannon? The same prudence
 is as necessary in anchoring a Fleet, and
 especially when it is encumbered with a
 number of transports.

In answer to the charge of my sending
 away the Pilot destined to conduct the

fleet, &c. I shall here recapitulate part of my Affidavit at the Court Martial upon that Subject; and to which transaction the whole Fleet and Forces were Eye-witnesses,

“ The signal being given, the deponent took his leave about noon of Sir *Edward Hawke*, and made sail with his division. The *Medway*, which was a-head by Sir *Edward's* Order, to look out for land, about 2 or 3 o'Clock, as near as he could remember, made a signal for seeing the land, very soon after the deponent saw it himself: and as his own Ship, and those of his division, were ordered to prepare for the attack, the Lieutenant or Captain came to acquaint him the Ship was clear and ready for action; this was about 4 o'clock, the wind at that time, and to the best of his remembrance the whole day, was about N. E. As he looked upon a Ship cleared, and in order for battle, as a very entertaining fight, he desired Major-General *Conway* to go down to see his Ship between decks: while they were viewing her, one of his Lieutenants came down, sent by the
“ Captain

“ Captain to acquaint him Captain *Keppet*
 “ hailed the Ship, and told them there
 “ was a *French* Man of War standing in
 “ for the Fleet; for some small space of
 “ time the deponent took no notice of it,
 “ thinking it impossible the Fleet should
 “ not see her; a second message was sent
 “ him down to the same purpose; he then
 “ went upon deck immediately with Gene-
 “ ral *Conway*, and was shewn her by his
 “ Captain, when with their Glasses they
 “ plainly discovered her to be a two deck-
 “ ed Ship; she soon made a private signal,
 “ by hoisting a Jack at her mizzen-top-
 “ mast-head: The deponent was in doubt,
 “ whether to make a signal to any of his
 “ division to chace, being ordered on a
 “ different service, which he took notice
 “ of to General *Conway* and his Captain.
 “ He judges he was then at least five miles
 “ a-head of Sir *Edward Hawke*, and the
 “ ship much nearer to him and his divi-
 “ sion than she was to Sir *Edward Hawke*
 “ and the rest of the Fleet; and he
 “ plainly saw, if some of his division
 “ did not chace her, none of the others
 “ could possibly see her, so as to chace
 B 4 “ her

“ her, when night came on. The *Mag-*
 “ *nanime* was then about 2 miles to Lee-
 “ ward of them, upon which he threw
 “ out her signal to chace, and hailed
 “ Captain *Keppel* in the *Torbay*, and di-
 “ rected him to chace also, observing at
 “ the same time to General *Conway* and
 “ his Captain, that if Sir *Edward Hawke*
 “ did not approve of what he had done,
 “ he would certainly call them in again;
 “ but instead of that, Sir *Edward* threw
 “ out their signals to chace, by way of
 “ confirming what he had done, and in
 “ addition, made the *Royal William's*
 “ signal, also belonging to his division;
 “ two more signals for Ships in the rest of
 “ the Fleet were thrown out afterwards,
 “ but very soon recalled. Early the next
 “ morning, Sir *Edward Hawke* sent the
 “ deponent the following order, to take
 “ under his command three other ships,
 “ in the room of those three ships sent to
 “ chace, viz.

By

*By Sir Edward Hawke, Knight of
the Bath, Admiral of the Blue Squa-
dron of his Majesty's Fleet.*

“ You are hereby required
DUBLIN, “ and directed to take un-
BURFORD, “ der your command the
ACHILLES, “ ships named in the mar-
“ gin; the Captains of
“ which have my orders to follow your
“ directions; and proceed, without a
“ moment's loss of time, to put in execu-
“ tion the orders you received from me
“ yesterday. For which this shall be your
“ order.”

“ Given under my
To Charles Knowles, “ hand on board his
Vice Admiral of “ Majesty's ship *Ramil-*
the Red Squadron “ *lies*, at sea, this 21st
of his Majesty's “ *September 1757.*”
Fleet.

ED. HAWKE.

By Command of the Admiral.

J. HAY,

“ In

“ In obedience to that order, the de-
 “ ponent proceeded with his division with
 “ all the sail they could carry, to get in,
 “ and make what land it was: He judges
 “ it was about 9 o’clock when they were
 “ got within about two miles of the
 “ land in 11 Fathoms water, very hazy
 “ thick weather, so as the Pilot desired
 “ the Ship might be tacked, and laid with
 “ the head off, till it cleared, so as
 “ he could see his marks. Whilst he was
 “ laying to, he made a signal for the cap-
 “ tains of his division, and ordered them
 “ to send for their Pilots; no two of
 “ whom agreed what land it was; their se-
 “ veral Examinations he took down, and
 “ sent them to Sir *Edward Hawke*, who
 “ by that time was advanced nearer to him
 “ by 2 or 3 miles than he was before,
 “ as he, the deponent, lay with his
 “ head off shore. In his letter to Sir
 “ *Edward*, he acquainted him, that not
 “ one of the Pilots would take charge to
 “ lead in, even with a twenty gun Ship;
 “ if they would, his division should have
 “ followed her. Soon after his boat went
 “ away, he made a Signal for speaking
 “ with the Admiral, seeing he continued
 “ under Sail, and did not stop to take up
 “ his

“ his boat. At the same time, he made
 “ sail with his division towards him, and
 “ by about 12 joined him; when the de-
 “ ponent got on board him, he was sur-
 “ prized to see Mr. *Keppel* on board, and
 “ also to find the *Magnanime* and *Royal*
 “ *William* had joined him again, which
 “ the thick weather prevented the depo-
 “ nent’s knowing. Sir *Edward Hawke*,
 “ upon the deponent’s acquainting him
 “ with what had happened, (for he thinks
 “ he got on board before his letter) im-
 “ mediately sent for the pilot of the *Mag-*
 “ *nanime*, at the same time telling the de-
 “ ponent, he judged what was the mat-
 “ ter, when he saw him bring to; for his
 “ pilot had refused carrying his Ship in.
 “ When the pilot of the *Magnanime* came
 “ on board, he immediately told them
 “ what land it was, and, after offering
 “ to carry in the Fleet, returned on board
 “ his own ship, and led the deponent’s
 “ division in, the Admiral and the rest of
 “ the Fleet following. The wind was
 “ pretty fresh all this day, till towards the
 “ evening, when about 6 o’clock the tide
 “ of Flood being spent, the *Magnanime*
 “ made the signal to anchor; they were
 “ then in the mouth of the Pertuis of *An-*
 “ *tiche*. About 8 o’clock, Sir *Edward*
 “ *Hawke*

“ *Hawke* made the signal for the Fleet to
 “ anchor, and they continued working in,
 “ and anchored as they came to proper
 “ Births all night. Early in the morn-
 “ ing of the 22d, the *Magnanime* made
 “ the signal, when the deponent weighed
 “ with his division, and Sir *Edward* and
 “ the rest of the Fleet weighed also;
 “ about 11 o’Clock, it falling calm, the
 “ signal was again made to anchor; about
 “ 2 or 3 a small breeze springing up
 “ westerly, the *Magnanime* made the
 “ signal, and weighed again, and the
 “ deponent ran in with his division, till
 “ between 9 and 10 o’clock at night, Sir
 “ *Edward Hawke*, and his division, and
 “ all the transports following, when the
 “ deponent’s division came to an anchor.”

By this it evidently appears, there were
 but 3 hours time lost; for at 9 o’clock in
 the morning, the Pilot refused taking
 charge of the ships of my division, and at
 12 the *Magnanime* had joined us again,
 and we proceeded. It likewise appears,
 that Sir *Edward Hawke* repeated those
 ships signals to chace, which was an ap-
 probation of my conduct, and which he
 confirmed afterwards—more fully, by a
 public declaration in my presence. In fact,
 it

it cannot strictly be said, that one moment's time was lost by those ships chasing; because if the reader will please to observe, the calms we met with afterwards, and the tides, which obliged the Fleet to anchor twice, would equally have delayed us, had we been 2 or 3 miles farther to windward, which is more than we could have gained in those 3 hours, as the wind was at N. E. which is right out of the bay.

III.

“ In the first place, then, though I have
 “ by no means that high opinion of the French
 “ wisdom and ability which you entertain,
 “ and on every occasion extol so highly; yet
 “ I do suppose, that in matters of defence,
 “ they conduct themselves on principles si-
 “ milar to those which are adopted by the
 “ rest of mankind. I do suppose, for in-
 “ stance, that when they build a fort, it is
 “ intended either to offend or defend. Fou-
 “ ras was weak to the land; it stood at the
 “ water's edge to guard the Channel; it
 “ stood even on a bank that ran into the wa-
 “ ter; and as Col. Wolfe, who seems to
 “ be the first officer who thought of recon-
 “ noitring it, tells us, it had 24 embra-
 “ sures to the water-side. What was the
 “ use of this Fort? Was it to guard a
 “ bank

" bank of sand, over which scarce a Thames
 " wherry could pass? If the Guns of no
 " Ship whatever could reach the Fort,
 " could the guns of the Fort reach any
 " Ship? According to Mr. Knowles, there
 " was no channel at all, or it lay out of
 " gun-shot of the Fort. At 2 miles di-
 " stance, the Vice-Admiral's master found
 " but 6 Feet water at high water; at
 " near 3 miles distance, the Bomb-ketch,
 " which drew but 11 feet water, went a-
 " ground. The Coventry Frigate did the
 " same farther out than that, and the Bar-
 " fleur at a still greater distance. Now,
 " tho' after all this delay and hazard to
 " the ships, that Admiral thought fit to
 " sound and try the depth of the water at
 " a distance from the Fort, where no can-
 " non could reach; yet it is astonishing to
 " find not a single proof attempted to be
 " given of the depth of the water near the
 " shore, and within gun-shot of the Fort.
 " Is it impossible, then, that the channel, a
 " narrow one, might run in shore? Is it not
 " demonstrable, that it did so, both from the
 " nature of the thing, and the evidence of
 " those who knew and had navigated it?
 " What says Bonneau the Fisherman, exa-
 " mined by General Conway, and others?
 " There were 4 Fathom (24 Feet) water,
 " at

“ at half cannon-shot from Fort Fouras,
 “ a depth sufficient for a 60 gun ship. Now,
 “ though the land-officers did not chuse to
 “ trust to the intelligence of a Fisherman
 “ for the state of the Fortifications at
 “ Rochefort; yet it seems to be the best
 “ evidence, as to the depth of the channell,
 “ that could have been wished. There was
 “ the united testimony of Thierry and
 “ Bonneau, joined to the reason of the
 “ thing, that there must be a channel with-
 “ in gun-shot of the Fort, though the Ships
 “ miss’d the entrance of it. I might add,
 “ that though the Vice-Admiral could not
 “ conduct a Ship to it, there were Cap-
 “ tains in the Fleet, who, it seems, of-
 “ fered it. Captain Colby offered to car-
 “ ry in the Princess Amelia. How, then,
 “ can we unriddle this mystery? For a
 “ mystery there certainly is. Perhaps it
 “ is easier to guess the solution, than to
 “ explain it.

“ From all these circumstances, I say,
 “ it is clear, that Fouras must be and
 “ was accessible by sea; that the Board of
 “ Officers are therefore justified on their
 “ report, that the not attacking it by sea,
 “ appeared to be one of the causes of the
 “ Failure of the expedition.”

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It has ever been a Maxim with the greatest Generals in all ages, not to despise an enemy too much, and by that maxim they have shewn their wisdom; and tho' the *French* do not deserve any singular praise, for the erecting Fort *Fouras* on the spot on which it is situated, it being rather by chance than design it was built there; yet it has its uses, both to offend and defend. *Fouras* was the tower of an old Parish-church; which soon after the foundation of *Rocheport* in 1688, *Louis XIVth.* purchased of the proprietors, to make a *Tour de Garde*, for repeating signals from the *Isles of Oleron* and *Aix* up to *Rocheport*, which is one of its present uses. A Fort and Garrison being established in the *Isle of Aix*, *Fouras* was found to be the nearest and most secure communication in all weathers with that Island; so that in process of time, barracks and lodgments were built therein, and it was fortified to the sea by a strait curtain, and a round Tower in the middle, containing 18 Embrasures, in which were mounted but 16 guns, and those, in my opinion, not larger than 12 pounders. It has 4 or 5 more guns in the returning angle to the northward; but how it is defended on the land-side, is unknown to me.

This

This is a true account of the rise, state and condition of that formidable Fort, and of which an exact description was taken before it was reconnoitred by Col. *Wolfe*; for I took a draught of it immediately after the surrender of the *Isle of Aix*. From *Fouras* to *Roche-fort* is but 4 miles in a strait line, the road good, and no Rivers to cross. Plain principles, therefore, similar to those adopted by the rest of mankind, certainly led the *French* to fortify this convenient spot against any descent that might be made, and not to defend the entrance into the river *Charante*. For it was demonstrated by the Bomb-ketch, and the soundings confirm it, that Ships may pass and repass up the River *Charante* at a random-shot distance, if not quite out of gun-shot of that Fort; and it was near high-water at the time the *Coventry* and Ketch ran aground, neither of which were within gun-shot. It is proved before, that the masters went a sounding on the 26th, and this circumstance of the Bomb-ketch's being aground, happened not before the 29th; it is therefore the more astonishing to find, that this author should assert no attempt had been made to sound the depth of water near the shore, and

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within

within gun-shot of the Fort ; because he had not been informed of it, when it appears by the soundings already recited from Mr. *Poulglass*, that he had tried the depth of water within $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile of the Fort, and from 3-foot water quite across the River. The same had likewise been done by the Lieutenants of the *Royal William*, and other Officers and Pilots who all agreed in the same shoalings. It is therefore impossible there should be any channel, even a narrow one, and it is demonstrable there was not, both from the circumstances of the thing, and the evidence of those who traversed it. To the truth of this *Thierry*, the Pilot, would now readily subscribe his Testimony, would I accept it. A Channel, and a large one, up the river *Charante*, no body denies. First rate ships are built at *Roche-fort*, and go up and down that channel, but it does not lie near enough to *Fort Fouras* to batter it with ships, let who will say to the contrary.

I will now reason with the author on his own principles, and allow what *Bonneau* the Fisherman said to be true, that there was 4 fathom [24 feet] water at half cannon-shot from the Fort. Even that circumstance

circumstance will not establish his Hypothesis, " that *Fouras* was attackable and accessible by sea." A cannon-shot, most people know, will fly upwards of 2 miles, half cannon-shot will be about a mile, or more; now, allow at that distance, or even at half a mile, 24 feet water, the tide ordinarily rises 14 or 15 feet, in spring-tides more, near 20. The *Magnanime* drew upwards of 23 feet water, the *Barfleur* near 22: suppose either of these Ships to have been lightened 2 feet and a half, or 3 feet, which is more than could well be done with safety. Allow such Ships then, to get within half a mile of the Fort, before they grounded; suppose them also to set upright in the mud; and every thing to be conducted with the greatest skill, the tide ebbs fifteen feet; those ships will draw 19 or 20 feet, subtract either of these from the depth of the water, 24 feet, at half a mile distance, and there will remain about five feet; so that a space of fourteen feet in these ships bottoms, fore and aft from the water-line downwards, will remain dry, and be exposed to the Fire of the Fort until the next high water, when the tide must necessarily fill them; consequently

quently there will be an end then of those ships, and so of whatever number more you make trial.

Let us examine now what damage ships at that distance can do to a *Fort*. Sea officers will tell you, none; and experience in many cases has proved it. Thus far in answer to the testimony of *Bonneau*. Now let us see, how far we can unite the testimony of *Thierry* with it. *Sir Edward Hawke* deposes, soon after the giving me orders to have the *Barfleur* lighten'd, that this pilot recollected himself, and declared that even thus lighten'd the *Barfleur* could not be brought near enough. Add to to this *Captain Mackenzie's* certificate, that *Thierry* had the sole conducting and navigating the *Infernal Bomb*, which he ran aground, and it will be impossible, to unite this with the testimony of *Bonneau*, that there was a channel within gunshot of the Fort. The report of *Captain Colby's* offering to carry in the *Princess Amelia*, is a mystery that may be unriddled by a monosyllable, that may be guess'd at without explanation.

Take all the circumstances together that have been mentioned, and it is clear that

that *Fort Fouras* was not attackable or accessible by sea, and therefore the not attacking it by sea, was not one of the causes of the failure of the Expedition. I have said this not merely to justify my own conduct, which has been so much affected by this article, but to evince the impossibility of the thing itself.

IV.

“ *In the postscript it is said, that the*
 “ *Prudente, a French ship of 74 guns,*
 “ *with all her stores, &c. on board, escaped*
 “ *our fleet by running up to Rochefort, thro’*
 “ *that very channel which was not deep*
 “ *enough for an English long-boat.*

This circumstance of the *Prudente’s* running up the *Charante* just before the attack of the *Isle of Aix* is here laid hold of, as a farther proof of there being a channel near *Fouras*; and by the member of parliament is roundly asserted, that she passed within reach of the Fort. The short history of this circumstance is as follows. The morning after the arrival of the Fleet in the road of *Basque*, I discovered at day-break, a large ship of the Enemy’s lying within the *Isle of Aix*, on

which I went immediately and acquainted *Sir Edward Hawke*, and desired he would order a 60 or 70 gun Ship to go and anchor to the northward of the *Isle* of *Aix*, as soon as any wind sprung up, [it being then calm] to prevent her getting out that way, and for some other ship, and a fire ship to attack her where she lay, while the ships of my division were battering the *Fort* of *Aix*, not apprehending the Enemy's ship was lightened, and could have run up the channel. On these services *Sir Edward Hawke* detached *Captain Proby*, *Captain Byron*, and *Captain Barrington*; and as soon as the *French* man of War saw us weigh our anchors and get under sail, she immediately cut her cables, and run up within the river's mouth. Some days after the surrender of the *Isle* of *Aix*, I received a letter from *Sir Edward Hawke*, of which the following is an extract, and which sufficiently contradicts the assertion of both these authors.

S I R,

— “ One of the prisoners I
 “ have on board, who belonged to the
 “ *Prudente*, and was put in the *Fort*, to
 assist

“ assist in its defence, informs me, that
 “ when the *Prudente* ran up, she threw
 “ over board her guns, and has left a
 “ buoy upon them. I would have you
 “ order it to be look’d for and cut
 “ away.”

Accordingly I did give orders to *Captain Graves*, who found it, and cut it away; and also took up one of her anchors and cables. I would only observe upon this, that if the testimony of *Bonneau* the fisherman, or any other prisoner, is to be relied on, why then is not the testimony of this man to be relied on, who actually belong’d to the ship, and which was confirmed by finding the buoy, and taking up the anchor and cable?

V.

“ In the reply of the same author, to the answer of his military arguments by the Officer, (p. 35,—6.) is the following passage.
 “ Did they (meaning the Council of War)
 “ so much as examine *Thierry* the pilot, sent
 “ with them by the ministers as one on whose
 “ accounts they were to depend, and who at
 “ that time had given a proof that he deser-

“ ved some credit, by his conduct before the
 “ Fort of Aix, and his knowledge of the
 “ road? They did not. And now, it
 “ seems, Thierry is a silly fellow, the Mag-
 “ nanime sewed in the mud before the Fort
 “ of Aix, yet not through the ignorance of
 “ the pilot, but through the spirit of her
 “ Commander, who, as the French said,
 “ seemed to sail into the Fort and take it,
 “ without firing a gun. Thierry then had
 “ not miscarried in carrying in the Bomb-
 “ ketch, and he had done all which he under-
 “ took before the council to do; he had
 “ brought the Fleet safe into the road, when
 “ the pilot of the Neptune, and all the
 “ other pilots in the Fleet, had declared
 “ themselves unable to do it. Yet this Thi-
 “ erry, sent out with the strongest recom-
 “ mendations of the government, whose con-
 “ duct to that moment had merited full cre-
 “ dit, was never so much as sent for to their
 “ Council of War; but that very pilot of
 “ the Neptune (Admiral Knowles's pilot)
 “ who was so ignorant that he did not know
 “ even the road, and was obliged to lie by till
 “ Thierry came to carry his ship in, was
 “ the person on whose thorough knowledge of
 “ every thing relative to Rochefort, the
 “ Council of War thought fit to proceed.

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In answer to this charge, which is not particular against me, I do declare, that *Thierry* the pilot was often examined by the sea and land officers, sometimes collectively, and separately at other times, to every circumstance relating to the expedition, as they occurred to them; particularly the night before the council of War, to which he was summoned, though he did not appear; and all the intelligence he could give them they had, during the passage, and previous to any council of War. As to the Pilot of the *Neptune*, it is well known that I never placed any confidence in him; nor did I ever suffer him to conduct my ship, either into the road of *Basque*, or against the Fort, after his betraying his ignorance of the land. As to *Thierry* the pilot, I never knew he was recommended by the government, or that any ministers of the government knew there was such a person. I know I mention'd him at the Cabinet Council, as one acquainted with the *French* coast, his captain having told me so; and I offered to go down to *Portsmouth*, to take his examination; but the Council resolved to send for him up to town.

VI.

The same sort of charge which has been exhibited against Mr. Knowles in the preceding pages, has been repeated in another pamphlet, called a vindication of Mr. Pitt, by a Member of parliament, p. 30.—7.

The answer already given to the charges in the other pamphlets, I apprehend, is a sufficient refutation of all the particulars advanced in this, which relates to my conduct in the late expedition, excepting a single question, which the author calls upon me to answer. “ Was *Thierry* on “ board the *Barfleur* at that time ? ” To this I answer, I do not know ; it is totally immaterial ; but this I do know, that had there been water enough for the *Barfleur*, to have gone down to batter the Fort, the pilot *Thierry* was to have been the man to conduct her. The *Barfleur* was not run aground by the unskilfulness of her pilot, for she was never got under fail. She grounded at an anchor where she lay : lightening of her for that service would have been a work of two days at least, as all her provisions, cables, stores, and in short, every thing but her guns, ammunition,

ammunition, and ballast, must have been put ashore on the *Isle of Aix*. This is a circumstance that that worthy author seems to have been ignorant of; and during this preparation, there would have been time enough to have sent for *Thierry* the pilot, to have carried her in against the Fort. But it appears by *Sir Edward Hawke's* deposition, that this able pilot had found out his mistake before I could well deliver *Sir Edward's* orders to *Captain Graves* for that purpose. *Sir Edward Hawke* observes farther, that he look'd upon this proposal, when the pilot made it, as a *Gasconade*; and he remembers without doubt as well as I do, the pilot's expressing at the cabinet council, great diffidence of the depth of water about that Fort, which *Mr. Pitt* also confirms in his testimony at the Court-martial, *viz.* that nothing was clear about the taking any place by sea but the *Isle of Aix*.

My experience in the attack and defence of places made me judge, in looking over the plan, when it was under consideration before the Cabinet-Council, that the attack of *Fouras* was necessary to the success of the expedition, as it secured a safe communication with the Fleet,

Fleet, when the troops were landed, and therefore I then proposed the lightening a ship for that purpose. But after the surrender of the *Isle of Aix*, a favourable conjuncture seeming to present itself for seizing on that Fort, I wrote Sir *Edward Hawke* the following letter.

S I R,

I congratulate you upon this first attempt against the enemy; the Fort having surrendered to the *Magnanime* and *Barfleur*, by the time the *Neptune* could well let go her anchor, and bring her broadside to pass; so that the honour of the day is entirely owing to Captain *Howe*, and Captain *Graves*; the number killed and wounded is very trifling, but you will receive the particulars as soon as I can get them. If you do not intend to come up this evening, if you will please to make my signal, I will endeavour to come up to you, to receive your further commands, for I think we should strike while the Iron is hot.

I am, &c.

During the passage, I fitted all the long-boats in the Fleet with small guns
in

in their bows, got the carriages and cannon ready for landing at a moment's warning, and did every that thing was in my power to insure the success of the expedition, insomuch that it was never suggested, nor even whispered, that there was any backwardness in me. It was my station to obey, I did not command.

Let the reader lay these several Facts together which have been related, and notwithstanding the pains that have been taken to make the public believe, that I greatly contributed to the failure of the Expedition, he will find, that I had, and could have no other share in its execution, than in conveying the orders I received from Sir *Edward Hawke*, and seeing them obeyed by the proper Officers. Was the Case as it has been represented in these anonymous libels; was Vice-Admiral *Knowles* the cause of laying aside the attack on *Fort Fouras*; the conclusion to be drawn from it must be, that the Commanders in Chief, and other members of the Council of War, were all determined by the Vice-Admiral, and had no judgment of their own whereon to found their opinion: It must suppose Sir *Edward Hawke* to have laid down the Command, and delegated it to Mr. *Knowles*;
it

it must suppose Mr. *Knowles* to have been guided by opinion, without any experiments ; and it must, in the end, arraign the justice and wisdom of the administration, for not bringing him to justice for such a notorious breach of duty, and for their choice of Officers so unfit for such a command.

I said at the Court-martial on Sir *John Mordaunt*, that if I knew of any cowardice or treachery in the execution of this enterprize, that I would declare it openly ; and I added, that I hoped, if any one could charge me with being guilty of either, that he would do it, in order that I might be brought to justice. These words, and many others which I spoke, and thought essential, are omitted in the printed proceedings of the Court-martial. This was a declaration, however, which betrayed neither Guilt nor Fear ; and I repeat it here, to shew that I ought to be acquitted of both ; or, as it is never too late to bring Criminals to justice, that I ought to undergo a public trial, and if Guilty, a publick condemnation. My Commander in Chief, has never so much as accused me of neglect or breach of duty : and he is not only the properest
judge

judge of my behaviour, but the proper person, if he disapproved it, to bring me to a trial to answer his accusation.

Hard, indeed, is my fate, to stand exculpated in the opinion of my superior officer, who saw my conduct, and under whose command I acted, and yet to be singled out as the only flag on that expedition left unemployed in a time of war : And this after Forty one Years constant and faithful Service in the Navy.

CHARLES KNOWLES.

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